

## SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM

*“Entirely too many of our young people do not have access to nutritionally balanced meals in the summer. We must find ways to increase the number meals that we serve. We do that by doing a better job of promoting the existing program and we also must expand the number of sites that offer meals.”*

- Mayor Mark Mallory

Mayor Mallory teamed with the Children’s Hunger Alliance, Cincinnati Public Schools and other area partners to increase the number of young people who receive meals through the summer food program. Every summer, free meals are available to Cincinnati area youth at a number of locations around Cincinnati. However, most Cincinnati teenagers and children do not take advantage of the meals.

The summer meals are funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Summer Food Services Program. Every summer, Cincinnati uses only a fraction of the funds available for this region. There is no limit to the amount of meals that could be served, yet participation remains low.

There are three approaches to increase program participation:

- 1) Recruit new community organizations to become sites that serve free meals.
- 2) Encourage youth organizations and summer programs to take youth participants to existing free lunch locations.
- 3) Raise awareness of the availability of free lunches in parents, young people, and organizations.

This summer, the Cincinnati Recreation Commission expanded the number of Recreation Centers and Pools that are locations for the free meals.

### **Facts:**

- According to Cincinnati Public Schools, over 66% of Cincinnati youth qualify for the Federal School Lunch and Breakfast Program.
- Statewide, 92% of these students do not participate in the Summer Food Service Program.
- Last summer, 99,000 meals were served in Cincinnati.
- This summer over 108,000 meals have been served through July 17.
- In addition, there has been success in opening new sites this year, including five new Cincinnati Recreation Commission sites, two new Salvation Army sites, two new sites at Victory Neighborhood Services, and three new sites at public libraries.

The initiative partners the Mayor’s Office with the Children’s Hunger Alliance, Cincinnati Public Schools, the Cincinnati Recreation Commission, and community organizations, including the World Outreach Christian Church, the Salvation Army, and Victory Neighborhood Services.

**For Further Information or to become a Food Program Site:**

[Children's Hunger Alliance](#) – 614-341-7701

- For the Summer Food Service near you – 800-481-6885
- To volunteer – 614-341-7700 ext. 264